

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone)

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SUBJECT The Niederfinow Ship Lift

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1. The Niederfinow ship lift (Schiffshebewerk) which is located on the Oder-Havel Canal, was not damaged during the war and is in the same condition as it was prior to 1945. No steps have been taken to expand this shiplift and no such measures are necessary. Near this shiplift is a canal with four locks, and since the damage to the lower head of the fourth lock was repaired in 1951, the canal has been serviceable.
2. Lockage of vessels takes 20 minutes. Since the traffic is not as heavy as it was prior to 1945, the shiplift is not fully exploited.* A new rubber packing is needed for the tank (Trog) of the ship lift. However, it is difficult to obtain the necessary material in the Russian Zone of Germany. If the old rubber packing becomes entirely unserviceable, the ship lift will have to be closed temporarily.
3. The shiplift is guarded by a detail of 35 Volkspolizei. The area is surrounded by a barbed-wire fence. No other protective measures have been taken.

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* Comment. According to the Guide to German Waterways, Part 4, The Navigable waterways between the Elbe and Oder Rivers, 4th edition, issued in 1940, the Niederfinow Canal has a tank which is 84.95 x 11.95 meters, accommodates either four vessels with a length of 40.2 meters, a beam of 4.6 meters, a draft of 1.6 meters, and a load capacity of about 200 tons or one vessel of 1,000 tons, and lifts 36 meters. Minimum clearance below the lift gates is 4.5 meters. The four chamber-locks near the ship lift are 1,200 meters long. Each lock has a usable surface of 67.5 x 9.95 meters, capable of accommodating either two vessels of the above measurements or one vessel with a length of 67 meters, a beam of 3.2 meters, a draft of 2 meters and a load capacity of about 760 tons.

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The Elbe River ship lift and the nearby locks, as well as the Magdeburg-Bohnsen and near Magdeburg ship lifts, are vulnerable points in the network of waterways in the Russian Zone of Germany and any shutdown of these three ship lifts and the Niederrhein locks would greatly disrupt east-west traffic in inland shipping in the Russian Zone of Germany.

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